The .
COMMONWEAL

VOLUME XLIII October 19, 1945 NUMBER 1

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THE COMMONWEAL *is indexed in the Reader's Guide, Catholic Periodical Index and Catholic Bookman. Founded by the Calvert Associates, Inc., in 1924, with Michael Williams as President and Editor.*

Published weekly and copyrighted 1945 in the U.S.A. by THE COMMONWEAL *Publishing Co., Inc.*, 386 *Fourth Avenue*, New York 16, N. Y. ASHland 4-9685. Entered as second class matter February 9, 1934 at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879. U.S. $5 a year. Canada and Foreign $6. Single copies 10c.

Editors: EDWARD SKILLIN, JR.

PHILIP BURNHAM *(now on duty with the armed forces)* HARRY LORIN BINSSE, *Managing Editor;* C. G. PAULDING, *Literary Editor;* JOHN C. CORT, *Associate Editor;* JOHN BRUBAKER, *Advertising Manager.*

Need for a Settled Landscape

WE WOULD make no pretense whatever of remembering very much of what we were taught in Geology 1 about the formation of this terrestrial globe—yet there are certain images. The ice advancing, covering a continent; a desert where there had been a sea; the mountains folding and unfolding and then, finally, there would be part of the world on which man could live. Once established, the globe, for man's convenience, barring volcanoes, floods and earthquakes, has remained so ordered and constant that it has become the image itself of immutability. The last unknown continent has been discovered; no new continent—we hope—suddenly will arise. In man's very short perspective—he has known the earth for so short a time—the earth appears a companion whose ways are known.

But in politics no sooner does the world—of nations—appear ordered and settled than a whole series of prehistoric geological catastrophes occur.

There was, for instance, a Europe, and outside Europe there must have been a China, an America, an Australia, but no one in Europe knew they existed and so Europeans made plans for Europe without taking them into account. Suddenly a volcanic Columbus erupted an America that had to be fitted into the picture puzzle, and there were all the other new pieces brought by the travelers, merchants and colonists. You could not even send a few criminals off into exile but what they would found a country.

Finally the world was all equipped with nations but the nations were not like lakes, mountains, fields and rivers; their size, their power, their measurements were never constant. There was no way of arranging them in any settled order because it was their nature to change.

There were all the little German States, in more recent history, that seemed nicely and neatly arranged; they provided charming little Courts to visit, excellent court musicians, an unlimited supply of wives for foreign rulers. They seemed and often were as peaceful as the landscape they graced. Then suddenly, in a decade or two, there was the German State and, with or without war, Europe ever since has been trying to find where in the world to put it, how in the world to fit it in.

There was Russia. We were aware that Russia existed; there were pictures of sleighs in the geography books and the bulblike domes of the Russian churches. Through the immense genius of the Russian novelists we even knew quite a good deal about the Russian people. Napoleon had visited Russia and the Russian Czar had repaid—with a vengeance—the visit by coming to Paris. There had been at the time a tentative effort on the part of the Russians to bring Russia into an ordered and integrated Europe. The effort failed of course and Russia returned into the mystery of its vast spaces. So that when we thought of Russia we thought that Russia was somewhere very far away, interesting but remote.

After two great wars and a revolution Russia is even more interesting than before but not at all remote. In this task of attempting to put together the pieces of the world there is this new piece suddenly presented to us. We have to measure its size, its angularities.

The pieces must be brought together. The Russian piece, the German piece. The most appalling mistake that could be made would be to think that an advance toward order can be furthered by joining together certain of the pieces and calling them blocs. Blocs will fit together even less readily.

(There is the new piece, China; there will be the new piece, India: new political continents.)

Man could not start thinking, he could not live with any kind of logic, or hope, or devotion, until the material world had settled into the right temperature and into some stability of shape. Man's thinking, logic, hope and devotion have reached a point where they risk paralysis unless the political world can be brought now into some sort of order.

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The Demand for Higher Wages

AS WE go to press several major labor disputes are on the way to settlement and the general labor relations picture is somewhat calmer for the moment. The nation, however, has no reason to assume that labor and management have come to any fundamental basis for agreement on post-war wage levels and the like. And it is doubtful whether any general labor-management meeting will, merely by the fact of its taking place, produce mutual understanding and agreement. The painful phenomena of strikes and threats of strikes continue to be in prospect.

It is an elementary principle in these matters that each wage dispute must be evaluated on its own merits. Yet a study of certain specific cases can provide a rough sort of yardstick which may be generally useful.

For this purpose consider the present wages and demands of the auto workers, who are decidedly at the higher end of the scale as far as factory wages go. To be even more specific, take the situation of Tom Gatti, one of the 135,000 employees of the Ford Motor Company. He is a member of the United Auto Workers; he and his family are pictured in the October 8 *CIO News*. To support his wife and five young children Mr. Gatti worked from 54 to 60 hours a week during the war. Last year he made a down payment on a modest seven-room house in Detroit with the bulk of his wartime savings.

Here is the Gatti family picture in dollars and cents. By dint of considerable overtime he brought home for the two weeks ending January 12, 1944, for example, $106.18 (deductions had included taxes, insurance, $1 union dues and a $37.50 war bond). But now the peacetime work week has shrunk to 40 hours at straight time pay; for a comparable period ending September 16, 1945 his net pay was $77.60. And prices have not fallen any.

The Gattis have to pay $45 a month on their home. Solid food costs them $23 per week, with milk $9 per month additional. Fuel costs them about $100 per year, with electricity, gas and water another $10 and more per month. Adding this all up shows that Mr. Gatti's present wages do not quite meet his family's expenses for food and shelter; nothing is available for clothing the seven people in his household—not to mention transportation, educational, medical and recreational expenses. Is it any wonder, then, that the Gattis now find themselves unable to pay their bills? Anyone who asserts that Mr. Gatti's wage demands are excessive must therefore inevitably maintain: that the American automobile industry—our prize mass production exhibit—cannot afford to pay its workers a family living wage; further that the sales of new cars, radios, household appliances and of all the things which are supposed to bring about a solid peacetime prosperity will have to be accounted for by the 9 per cent or less who constitute America's higher income brackets.

Here is another set of figures, simpler but convincing in a general way. R. J. Thomas of the Auto Workers estimates the labor cost of a pre-war car as $155; without making allowance for current higher labor productivity, present labor cost per car is $189. But while the labor cost per car has risen $34, the wholesale price per car has been raised $135. This hundred dollar differential would seem to allow a good margin above the increased costs on raw and semi-finished materials.

Admittedly these are figures furnished by one side in the industrial controversy. Yet the family wage has to be the starting point. Further, if the American worker does not have enough income to buy anything beyond the bare essentials, the country will head straight into another big depression.

Tempest in the Garden

ON SEPTEMBER 24 a rally was held at Madison Square Garden by the Spanish Refugee Appeal of the Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee. Those sponsoring both this committee and the rally are a peculiar mixture, including a considerable number of persons closely linked to the Communist Party, but including many persons whom it would be most difficult to describe as in any way sympathetic to Stalinism. Yet since a Soviet diplomat was among the speakers at the rally, it must be said that the whole business lent itself to an accusation of communism. The purpose of this meeting was to raise funds for Spanish republicans at present in exile and, politically, the rally was intended to express the desire that England and America actively work to oust General Franco. With one exception, no reference to any church was made throughout the rally's three-hour duration. One of the speakers—by radio from London—was that extraordinary gadfly of the British Labor Party, the unfortunate Harold Laski, whom an evil fate chanced to have lodged in the chairmanship of the National Executive Council of that Party at the moment when it came to power. Trust Mr. Laski to start another tempest. The general line of his brief address was what one would expect—all the anti-fascist clichés strung together in such a way that even the most sympathetic listener would be forced to confess that here was no brilliant or moving political document but a hand-me-down of the most well-worn variety. Among the other stock phrases in his speech were the following: "Is it [a monarchy] likely to prevent the Roman Cath-

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olic Church in Spain from remaining a rich monopolist at the expense of mass poverty?" "Do we pursue a policy of watchful waiting . . . because we fear the hostility of the Vatican to our support of a democratic resurgence in Spain?" "Our peoples didn't make the immense sacrifices of this war to perpetuate . . . any unedifying mythology like a Vatican-sponsored King of Spain trying hastily to learn the vocabulary of the Four Freedoms while making it painfully evident that he finds no meaning in the words."

This is no place to discuss these constantly repeated stock phrases. If anyone wishes to get a reasonably objective view of the wealth of the Spanish Church, he may do so by consulting Gerald Brenan's "The Spanish Labyrinth." But probably even Mr. Laski was aware that his accusation here was greatly over-simplified and would be recognized by anyone knowing the subject as cheap political rhetoric. His second assumption—that the Vatican is opposed to democracy—might have been true had it been stated seventy-five years ago; there is plenty of evidence that it is not true today. Naturally the Vatican will oppose any "democracy" which does not allow Catholics to practice their religion; unhappily such "democracies" have existed in the past. But would Mr. Laski openly support such a democracy? And all the evidence indicates that substantially the only official support for a Spanish monarchy comes from certain of Mr. Laski's own countrymen.

The point is that Mr. Laski did not properly aim his shots. Had he said that the Vatican supports Franco, or that an important and vocal section of Catholic opinion, especially in England and America, not only is opposed to the resurgence of a régime headed by the present leaders of Spanish republicanism but also highly approves of Franco, he would have said things which no one could truthfully deny. THE COMMONWEAL has been saying as much since 1937. We believe, however, that the Vatican will continue its traditional policy of trying to come to terms with *de facto* governments and that if Franco is clearly on the way out, it will not actively oppose the establishment of a republican régime.

There would have been no need to comment on all this had not a number of prominent Catholics immediately seen in Mr. Laski's remarks a vicious attack on the Church as such. And this reaction we deplore.

What Mr. Laski attacked was the discipline and politics of the Church and not the Church itself, and it is a sad thing when Catholics so easily earn the dislike of their neighbors by the assumption that any criticism of any aspect of the Church is inadmissible. We must ever be watchful not to allow our Faith to serve as a cloak under which we strive to smother political discussion.

Time for Direct Action

THE PRESS reports a negative reaction in the halls of Congress to President Truman's request for $550,000,000 additional appropriation for UNRRA. Some of our representatives were reported to have suggested that such matters be now turned over to the Red Cross. Such sentiment is hard to square with the fact that this winter comprises the very period envisioned when the UNRRA was set up. And the need is urgent.

Pressure upon one's representatives in Congress—and encouragement of the President—is one means of taking a hand in such vital matters. There is another more direct way—more trouble but more satisfying. That is to send individual packages to Europe personally. This crucial winter when survival is at stake.

The first step in such a venture is to consult your local post office. Regulations are continually changing and it is necessary to know definitely the limitations as to size and weight, what sorts of wrapping and declaration of contents are required, what countries are open for such shipments, how frequently you can send a package to a single individual (there is no limitation to the number of individuals to whom you may send packages). In every case the package must be marked "Gift" or the recipient will have to pay full duty.

The most useful contents of such packages (at present 7 pounds) are: vitamins, powdered milk, sugar, canned meat, coffee, tea, needles, pins, thread, wool yarn, warm, serviceable new and used clothing and small knicknacks not made of glass.

Here are some addresses of religious houses where individual packages are vitally needed; there is one for every weekday:

Rev. Mother General
Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart
Via Ulisse Aldrovandi 15
Rome, Italy

Mme. Marie Radegonde
16 rue de la Barouillere
Paris 6, France

Casa del Sacro Cuore
Via Nomentana 118
Rome, 37, Italy

Mme. Therese Mauger
15 rue Josephat
Brussels, Belgium

Mme. Marie Martens
Kloster Marienburg 2
Duivengas, Holland

Mme. Marie de la Croix
Villa Mercede
21 Via Tiburtina
Rome, 38, Italy

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"...And Be a Man with Men"

L. H. Myers and his forebears

Anne Fremantle

EVEN IN England, where son still follows father through the same schools, into the same profession, whether the latter be baker or banker, it is unusual for four generations to be so distinguished in the same profession as to "make" the august pages of the "Dictionary of National Biography." Especially when the *profession* in question is that of writer. Leo Hamilton Myers, who died last year, was the great-grandson of Thomas Myers, born in 1774 of "a family long settled in Yorkshire." Of old yeoman stock, Thomas became professor of mathematics at the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich. Amongst his works are "Remarks on a course of education, designed to prepare the youthful mind for a career of honor, patriotism and philanthropy," "A new and comprehensive system of modern geography, mathematical, physical, political and commercial" and last—but most up-to-date—"An essay on improving the condition of the poor with hints on the means of employing those who are now discharged from his Majesty's service" (this was published in 1814). Thomas recommended geometry "for inspiring the minds with a love of truth." A certain didactic tendency may here be noted, which will reappear in the family, from time to time.

Thomas's son Frederic, born in 1811, was a scholar at Clare, Cambridge, and later a Fellow. He was a great Hebrew scholar. In 1836 he was ordained; in 1838 appointed as perpetual curate to St. John's, Keswick. And there remained until he died in 1851. He married, happily, Susan Marshall, the daughter of a distinguished M.P., John Marshall, and knew Wordsworth, who was still living at Rydal. His best known book, "Catholic Thoughts," in four volumes, was privately printed in 1834, and publicly issued in 1873 and again in 1883. Myers stated as his premise that "the primary idea of the church of Christ is that of a brotherhood of men worshipping Christ as their revelation of the Highest, and that equality of spiritual privileges is so characteristic of its constitution that the existence of any priestly caste in it is destructive of it." In spite of this communistic, perhaps, rather than Catholic, thought, the perpetual curate continued to enjoy his stipend, and the friendship of such Broad Churchmen as Stanly and Jowett. And, surprizingly, his four volumes continued to sell; more sold after forty years than after thirty.

Frederic died when his eldest son, another Frederick, was but eight. The child was already strangely preoccupied with death and the problem of survival. A dead mole, crushed by a cart, seen at six, "caused intense emotion"; the child could not bear the idea it would never live again. Comforting him after his father's death, his mother, to avoid explaining the dogma of hell, suggested in answer to his query, where did bad people go? that they just ceased to be. This seemed to him far more horrible than hell—for to be in hell was at least to be. In turn comforting his mother, who declared she would never be happy again, the eight-year-old told her, "You know God can do everything, and He might give us just once such a vision of Himself as should make us happy all our lives after." His son, Leo Hamilton, was to experience some such interior vision; though never Frederick.

Frederick grew up to go to school at Cheltenham, where he learned the whole of Virgil by heart for fun, and at seventeen experienced "intoxicating joy" in the discovery of Sappho. At Oxford he took every possible prize, got a "double-first" at Trinity, and became a Fellow. But he was no mere bookworm; on a vacation in America, he swam across Niagara Falls, the first person to succeed in this feat. He first published verse, his long "Siant Paul," was immediately very popular, vying with the Rubaiyat for first place, bound in hand-tooled leather, on every Victorian drawing-room occasional table. Ruskin, whose "Sesame and Lilies" was to suffer a like fate, was a great admirer of Myers's "Saint Paul" but A. C. Benson, in whose house Leo Hamilton Myers was at Eton, condemned it as "of almost cloying sweetness." Frederick Myers told Benson how the "beat of the curiously infectious stanzas had made havoc of his plans."

> Christ! I am Christ's! and let the name suffice you
> Ay, for me too, He greatly hath sufficed . . .
> Christ is the end, for Christ is the beginning
> Christ the beginning, for the end is Christ.

Many of the lines have faded into current usage so completely that few remember their origin:

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Saints did I say? With your remembered faces
Dear men and women, whom I sought and slew
Ah, when we mingle in the heavenly places,
How will I weep to Stephen and to you!

O, for the strain that rang to our reviling
Still, when the bruised limbs sank upon the sod.
Oh, for the eyes that looked their last in smiling
Last on this world here, but their first on God.

In spite of the rather muscular Christianity of these verses, the two sonnets "Would God it were morning" and "Would God it were evening" show Myers groaning as greatly as he could glory. He settled down at Cambridge where he was Classical Lecturer. Outwardly, his life was very happy and successful. But, as A. C. Benson sternly comments, "an emotional life lived with so complete an abandonment, in so prodigal and reckless a fashion," could only end in disaster. Myers lost his faith. In an essay on Darwin—one of his best, written years later—he takes the great scientist to task for losing *his* faith so easily; in fact, for just letting it atrophy. For Myers, it was the old problem of personal immortality which, denied by Darwin and the scientists as well as by the positivists, destroyed his belief. He suffered acutely, until one starlit night, talking with Henry Sidgewick, he asked whether science, that had destroyed his faith, might not itself offer a basis for the possibility of immortality? Sidgewick replied it might, and from that day, he and Myers together pursued, through mediums, telepathy, séances, spirit rapping and writing, etc., the faith Myers had lost.

Together they founded in 1882 the Society for Psychical Research. In 1880 Myers married Evelyn Tennant, and two years later their son, Leo Hamilton, was born. It was an ideally happy marriage. Myers had built himself a magnificent house on the outskirts of Cambridge, and gave the impression rather of a Venetian merchant of the Renaissance than of a Cambridge Don: opulence, seclusion, dignity surrounded him. He published a ponderous collection of data, "Phantasms of the Living," to which he wrote a long introduction; and later "Human Personality," a book on survival. Though William James admired this book "whose object was to predicate for the life of man a moral value and a freedom of which science had divested it . . ." the actual result of his theory "is to reduce it to a more abject and meaningless condition than any to which it could be thrust by any scientific determinism. Though interesting and suggestive in many incidental ways, it is an astonishing monument of misapplied talents and speculation" as a reviewer wrote.

Myers's "theory" roughly was the one Laurence Oliphant had already hit upon, that ghosts are the reproduction of the impress on the atmosphere of physical movement or suffering, visible under certain conditions to sensitive persons.

Leo Hamilton Myers was sent to Eton, and then to Trinity, Cambridge. His father was "a careful, though not an anxious parent, desiring the best influence for his son." Once, when the boy was seized with a dangerous illness that had once nearly proved fatal to his father, Frederick was "deeply and distressingly anxious, but he seemed to think very little of himself or his anxieties, and showed the tenderest consideration for, and confidence in, everyone else. Yet in the background he seemed to enjoy an untroubled security" which puzzled his son's housemaster. There is a legend that he committed suicide, because he simply couldn't wait to know whether all he had come to believe proven by his experiments were true. But there is no confirmation of this. Indeed, A. C. Benson writes of his end (he died in Rome in 1901): "When he came to die, I have been told he faced the last passage not with courageous endurance but with irrepressible and exultant joy." Still, Benson wonders: the mystic as a rule he says—and was not Robert Hugh Benson his own brother?—gains strength by recognizing and augmenting his consciousness with that of some tremendous personal force around and about him, but with Myers the sense of his own personality, his private hopes of immortality, urged him on. His epitaph in the Protestant cemetery in Rome is from Homer: "Striving to save his own soul, and desiring his comrades homecoming."

★

In 1906 Leo published his first work: "Arvat," a dramatic poem in three acts—possibly the gloomiest play ever written. It takes place in darkening shadows, in obscurity beside which "Pélléas" is glorious and glowing. The old, bad king is dead as the play opens; the people cry

Joy lies in freedom, we shall soon be free

but the Herald sourly warns them

from your own selves ye never will be free.

Arvat's first line is

Dead faces in the moonlight all are gray

and the Boy, looking up from the dead king, answers:

And so are living faces. She being dead
The lady moon sees little difference.

Arvat kills his brother; his wife is seduced by a young noble and he is betrayed by the people, and escapes the city with an old beggar. In 1908 Leo Myers married Elsie, the daughter of the late General J. Palmer of Colorado Springs, Colorado, and nothing more was heard from him until 1923, when he published his first

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novel, "The Orissers." He was then 41. "The Orissers" is the story of two families. The Orissers, whose chief figures are the elderly Sir Charles (who marries his lovely young cousin and leaves her a widow), his wife's daughter and a step-son, Cosmo. The widow marries John Mayne, a covetous, rich busines man. The struggle is of the have-hads and the haves: John Mayne's love does him no good, "His horny skin was actually being corroded. Tender places were forming and they constituted so many inlets for perceptions which, instead of refining, corrupted his spirit, and he began to lose that quality which is the saving grace of such men—their spiritual obtuseness." In the struggle between material evil, the Maynes, and intellectual evil, the Orissers, the types are all static. None of them develops. The situations themselves are dramatic—John Mayne's long dying from cancer; Cosmo's painful decay; the seduction of Isabel—all are well described, but the reader feels he is moved from scene to scene like a knight at chess. In "The Clio," a study of a voyage to Brazil in "the most expensive yacht in the world," there is the far-off *décor* of the Amazon: snakes *et al.;* there is the remoteness of the boat, of wealth—one feels Myers is doing everything to remove his characters from what, in the explanatory preface to his next book, he is to call "undesired associations." In spite of the well-drawn tension between the brothers, Harry, who is like a gorilla, and the sweetly pretty Hugh; in spite of (for 1925) "rather a modern young lady who takes a lover when she felt she needed one," like an aspirin; in spite of quite an exciting revolution, the main preoccupations of the book still are death and life, not living and dying people. "Dying is a lonely business," says Sir James, as he goes about it; and "Harry went on, in the tone of one making a quotation, 'It is not sin but triviality that hideth us from God'; Stella frowned; she was tired of the religious sense in humankind."

★

It was with "The Near and the Far," published in 1929, that Myers, now 47, found his fame. "This is not historical," he explains in the introduction, in which he gives himself completely away. Only four of the characters are historical personages. The Emperor Akbar, his two sons and Nobarek. But Myers was much influenced, was in fact released by Arthur Waley's translation of Lady Murasaki's "Tale of the Genji," which was first published in English in 1925 (it was written about 1008) and which "paralleled, in the Antipodes, a thousand years ago contemporary feelings." "What a happy relief from the exercise of dodging undesired associations," cries Myers; "now the writer can take what he wants and leave behind just what he doesn't want. He is granted a new license by Lady Murasaki . . . he may now ask his readers to accept a juxtaposition of things that would have struck them as disconcertingly anachronistic." It is too much of an effort for the reader to follow the writer on to an entirely imaginary planet—and such a place as Perelandra requires too much preliminary explanation. But the Court of Akbar—that is perfect. Phantasy is too far; the current world too near; the Moghul Empire is at once "The Near and the Far," and Leo Myers begins.

It is curious how much he has gained by such a simply expedient. All his gaucheness is gone; "The Near and the Far" is an enchanting and a comfortable story. Little Prince Jali, whose father was a Buddhist, whose mother a Christian, "clung to the truth of appearances as something equal to the truth of what underlay them. There were two deserts: one that was a glory to the eye; another through which it was weariness to trudge." And this double vision occurs through the whole book, and through its sucessors, "Prince Jali," "The Root and the Flower" (which won both the James Tait Black and the Femina-Vie Heureuse prizes) and "The Pool of Vishnu." This completed the tale. Published in 1940 it was Myers's last book.

★

The four books are continuous, and the same moral is pointed by each of the characters. By Akbar, who fails both at life—his children rebel against him—and at religion: he has to invent a new one, the Din Illahi, which he imposes on his court. And this external synthesis is evil, for it is violent, outside himself: Gokal, the old Brahmin sage, who is the most sympathetic of all the characters, succeeds better. He sees the division, as expressed by the Rajah Amar, Jali's Buddhist father, who will leave his wife and child and go into a monastery, and Sita, the Christian, and to comfort the latter he quotes the Upanishad: "in darkness are they who worship the world but in greater darkness are they who worship the infinite alone. He who accepts both saves himself from death by the knowledge of the former and attains immortality by the knowledge of the latter. The gulf is not between those who affirm and those who deny, but between those who affirm and those who ignore. You advocate life's intensification; Amar its extinguishment; but you both recognize imperfection and you both aim at perfection."

The same truth is put into the mouth of Hari, the reprobate brother of Amar, who after a love affair with the princess Lalita, betrothed to one of Akbar's sons, makes love to his sister-in-law. "Good heavens, couldn't they see that love and death alone had an importance and death only

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as being the end of love?" Gokal resolves *his* dualism by child-mistresses—the gardener's fourteen-year-old daughter, and, when she dies, her sister, Gunevati, a devotee priestess of Kali, of the left-handed way, who initiates Prince Jali to sex, and lives only for sex and religion. Hari condemns Gokal as he condemns his brother, for taking too easy a way out (and is not Myers here condemning his own father? The relationship of Amar and Jali might well be that of Leo and the too-serene Frederick, sure of his personal immortality, as Amar is sure of his personal salvation).

Both Gokal and Amar, Hari says, "are living too contentedly in a closed circle. Gokal of the senses, Amar of the mind. But there was nothing either of them wished to give the world, or to receive from it." Gokal, in his better moments, sees "the riddle of the universe as only solved when men have reached a state of consciousness in which the riddle as such does not exist. But after the ascent to the One, there must be the descent to the Many." Buddha himself, after attaining Nirvana, came back to help mankind toward it; he refused it for himself until he could share it with his fellow creatures.

Jali is exquisitely drawn. The boy, leaning out over the balcony, musing "the loneliness of being the only specimen of oneself was part of one's own particular secret. Not even one's father or mother could guess it." And, books later, when he is nearly grown up, he realizes: "Life was not less dreadful than you imagined it; it was far worse. If one survived, if one remained alive in spite of all, it was because one could get accustomed to anything." And Sita sees her child changed, and reflects, "People are changing little by little the whole time; but one only notices it at a special moment by a special opening of the eyes."

In the long ride the brothers Amar and Hari take together, the difference between them is underlined by the difference in their loneliness. "I am alone in the world and every man is forever alone. Religion is what a man does with his solitariness," Hari quotes, but for his brother, "time passes rapidly in solitude, but slowly in the company of men."

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The English vision is mystic, not philosophic, and that is why, in general, England has produced poets and essayists rather than novelists and philosophers. Why then, for all their charm, for all their courage as an experiment, for all the success of the atmosphere, do Mr. Myers's philosophic novels miss greatness? They are very interesting; they are soundly constructed; they are beautifully written. But they are *not* novels, not even philosophical novels. In his introduction to "The Root and the Flower," published in 1934, which has the same first paragraph as the introduction to "The Near and the Far," but leaves out the references to the "Tale of the Genji," Mr. Myers states his position. "I hope this novel is philosophical only in the sense that M. Jourdain talked prose," he writes. "Between the novel as a description of persons and philosophy as a description of the universe there is, I think, a natural connection." That is true enough. But he goes on, "When a novelist displays an attitude of esthetic detachment from the ordinary ethical and philosophical preoccupations of humanity, something in us protests. We charge him with a kind of inverted cant, or artistic snobbery. Proust, for instance, by treating all sorts of sensibility as equal in importance, and all manifestations of character as standing on the same plane of significance, adds nothing to his achievement, but only draws attention to himself as aiming at the exaltation of a rather petty form of estheticism. For my part, I believe that a man serves himself better by showing a respect for such moral taste as he may possess. Instead of calling for the sacrifice of intellectual integrity this, as I see it, involves only a more imaginative, a more truly detached exercise of the reason. It can hardly be doubted that the reason's most necessary task at the present time is to examine its position in the psyche as a whole, to consider under what urge it functions, and finally, what judgment to pronounce upon the rival claims—if indeed they are rival—of moral and esthetic sensibility . . . the arts have their connoisseurs but what about connoisseurs of character? . . . we hear very little about moral susceptibility."

The trouble is, of course, that Mr. Myers has infused philosophy into his novels by making each of the characters express its quota of his own philosophy. There is no difference in what Jali, Sita, Hari, the Rajah, Gokal or even the girl Gunevati say, or rather preach. *They* are different, but you would never know it from their utterances. *They* live quite satisfactory, independent lives, but when they speak, as Hari puts it, "Above all doubts there rises our intuition of the moral law." Only it is not their intuition; it is Mr. Myers's certainty. One is reminded of his great-grandfather preparing the youthful mind for a career of honor and patriotism; or recommending geometry to instill a love of truth. There *is* something a little didactic in all the Myers's; Thomas, the two Frederics, even Leo. Leo's father was apparently the most successful lecturer—and on Nelson at that—Etonians ever heard.

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It is the old problem of the *roman à thèse*. Philosophy must exude out of the characters—

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out of their actions, their relationships, their way of living—not be spoken by them. Beauty and goodness are indeed both attributes of the same God, Who is Truth; but they are not the same attribute, and it is not by confounding attributes that one writes a great novel. What Mr. Myers feels, he succeeds in conveying astoundingly well: human loneliness; death and dying; the antitheses between life as being and life as becoming—these, which Englishmen have so incomparably rendered in verse, he puts quite admirably—indeed in some ways uniquely—into prose. This is a quality that England shares with the East, and is perhaps at the bottom of their mutual attraction: to be always aware of life *sub specie aeternitatis*. Hand-on-skull is not a pose in a country that has spoken of worms and epitaphs from the nameless Saxon thane who questioned Saint Augustine about the bird's flight from the dark night through the warm hall into dark night again, to Dylan Thomas and Auden today. When Jali sings "one of the common songs he knew"

> Dearest Lord, what art Thou?
> Thou art the tiny bundle
> Which Thine own
> Little mad woman
> Holds always to her heart

he is true both to his Oriental dress and to his English author. But when Leo Myers's father blames de Maupassant in his essay on "The disenchantment of France" for the same reasons that his son condemns Proust, it rings false. As Frederick Myers's "Saint Paul" told Christ, that unless he had seen Him "smile with kind eyes and be a man with men"

> Many would curse to Thee and I for one
> Fling Thee Thy bliss and snatch at Thy damnation
> Scorn and abhor the shining of the sun

for the law and the prophets require of man two commandments, not one. And, though Gokal is aware of this truth, and indeed announces it, Myers denies it in his esthetic theories. For moral truth and esthetic truth, though parts of a great whole, are separate truths. Both are necessary, and to confuse them is also to deny.

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What the mystical experience was that Leo Myers had in his early twenties, he himself never explained. Was it that, or was it some smouldering *rancune* against his dead father, that kept him silent so long? Or was it just that, with a wife he loved, and enough money, life was too easy, and he too lazy? There is evidence of a certain *mental* laziness in his disentangling his characters by artificial means, first by the yacht, then by the remote Moghul atmosphere. He doesn't want to struggle with them; Lady Murasaki got him a wonderful out, and he took it.

He was personally very handsome: tall, rather over-elegantly dressed. From living a good deal abroad his English had become slightly over-accented, almost curate-type Oxford. He was shy at parties, but delightful to carry off into a corner for an argument. When I first knew him, he called himself a communist. But not a "radish" as so many of us then were, parlorpinks for political reasons. He was not shaken, as the rest of us, by the current issues—China and Ethiopia and Spain. He was pro-Russian and pro-communist because he believed they guaranteed to everyone that minimum of education, culture, and authority necessary for a man to be an individual. "Every man has the right to be treated as a person," as the Guru says to Mobarek. And in the English class-system, that had not seemed to him possible. A man was a plumber or a printer or a peasant rather than a person.

He left no son; and with him after four generations of distinguished writers this family of Myers has ended. The name in England is always Jewish: did the Yorkshire yeomen from whom he came, stem from some medieval Jew? That might account for so rare a philosophical bent in his inheritance, and for the aloof serenity which also seems to have been inherited.

His Moghul novels will certainly remain read and known, interesting books a little outside the main stream of English literature, in the category, perhaps, of Rolfe's two novels, or of "John Inglesant." That they are not far greater is no fault of his writing, nor even of his characterization, but of the "gray theory" which overcasts the gold—the gold of matter and manner alike.

The Cedar Tree

In the beginning, in the unbeginning
Of endlessness and of eternity
God saw this tree.
He saw these cedar branches bending low
Under the full exhaustion of the snow.
And since He set no wind of day to rising
This burden of beauty and this burden of cold
(Whether the wood breaks or the branches hold)
Must be of His devising.

There is a cedar similarly decked
Deep in the winter of my intellect
Under the snow, the snow.
The scales of light its limitations tell.

I clasp this thought: from all eternity
God Who is good looked down upon this tree
White in the weighted air
And of another cedar reckoned well.
He knew how much each tree, each twig could bear,
He counted every snowflake as it fell.

JESSICA POWERS.

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Literary Excesses

A possible introduction to Saint-Exupéry

Roger Caillois

I MISTRUST the man of letters in the measure that his vocation places a distance between him and other men. It is inevitable, of course, that this distance, this remoteness should exist. Were he concerned with beauty alone no harm could be done, and one could but applaud the way he stands at a distance from humanity because the perspective thus obtained is needed for the creation of any work of art.

No one would dream of distinguishing between the artist who assembles words and the musician, the dancer or the painter. But it happens that words are not like colors, or motion, or sound, which have no definite meanings in themselves outside the use made of them by the artist, and which, even in the order to which he subjects them, remain without precise signification. These sounds, these colors, these motions are no more than the material of beauty and harmony. That perfection which we seek in skilfully inter-relating them depends only on their perceptible qualities, and on a certain general arrangement in which appears a complicated interplay of rhyme and number, symmetries and proportions.

Yet in all this there is no meaning that speech can express. These elements of beauty, on the one hand, satisfy an extreme sensuality; on the other hand, they give a pleasure in which none but the most abstract elements of form and proportions participate. Thus the fine arts present a manner of clothed geometry; colors, sounds and gestures dress these bodies, and the pleasure which ensues is born of the accurately concerted combining of a structure and a dress. There is no other element to intervene and here one may admire, in all freedom, each of art's miracles.

It is not the same thing at all when words are involved. Words belong to language, and language exists primarily to express thought. The cleverest poet cannot dismiss the meaning of words and use but their sound. He must take all of the word; the word is indivisible. Were this not so, one could compose poetry with floods of meaningless syllables, with simple sequences of vowels pleasant to the ear. An absurdity, of course. Assuredly the poet must please the ear, yet he must seek to please it through using words and language and there is nothing that he can do to deprive words of meaning.

In the case of all other writers it is obvious that what concerns them primarily is the meaning of words. With them language fulfils its natural rôle. They talk of man and it is to man that they talk. And they cannot interest man unless they succeed in awakening his comprehension of that which they desire to communicate. And no matter what they say they influence their readers. No matter how retiring they desire to appear, they are taken for models; their works provide all manner of advice.

Inevitably they suggest some attitude or other to those who admire them, and I do not think that they are too displeased by this fact, no matter how much they may think themselves detached and anxious only about, interested only in, their art. Indeed they are happy to be approved and followed, even those who seek to persuade their disciples never to approve or follow anyone. This applause, these contagions, are heavy with results. Each time they occur the world is affected. It is for this reason that the responsibility of the writer is infinitely serious though impossible of measurement.

The writer has total freedom to spread over the world practically anything that comes into his mind. He is free to follow this pleasant occupation without furnishing any bond whatever, any guarantee of any sort. He would be a saint who did not abuse this privilege.

We make not the slightest demand that writers be saints, we do not ask of them even that they provide the slightest proof of a right to express themselves as they do. They pontificate, they make what laws they like, and in the mirror of their works reflect an image of mankind as deformed as their clumsiness, their bad eyesight or their malice makes it. Moreover, nothing precludes the hypothesis that there are writers who aim to corrupt mankind; consciously and deliberately giving evil counsel; men who, perverted, wish to pervert—sometimes, perhaps, through mere curiosity as to the results.

How stop them? Everyone admits that the writer is free to use his pen as his fancy dictates. And of course if attacked, every writer will barricade himself behind his sacred right to freedom of opinion and the equally sacred privileges of genius—for it is not easy to see what scruple

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would restrain any writer from believing that he possesses genius and, consequently, that everything is permitted him.

On the other hand, how can writers be forced to speak only of what they know? How can one measure their competency? Their conceit will proclaim it universal. There is no extremity of extravagance to which they will not be carried if, of themselves, they do not place limits to their terrifying freedom. Yet everything urges them on to limitless incontinence where circumstances permit. The problem remains unsolvable.

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I exaggerate? Then look at the literature of the last twenty years. Look at it in general and not only at the heights to which its most gifted writers occasionally reached—though even the best of them not infrequently seem contaminated by the same evil. Remember especially some of the more strange aberrations proposed to us, I do not say by the most authoritative voices but certainly by the voices that made themselves most heard. I hasten to speak of these aberrations, place them on paper, before they be forgotten, or before the changing times make it seem implausible that they were ever seriously proposed. Never possibly have we seen all at once so many doctrines calculated to take away from man his consciousness of duties, his consciousness even of his own faculties. Truly, the writers have been urging him to reject conscience itself, intellectual and moral.

There was one prophet who claimed to provide the recipe for genius: It was to let the pen play about on paper without guiding it at all, only urging it to start moving again if by any chance it stopped. The idea was that in this way, from mysterious depths closed entirely to man's conscience, immortal masterpieces would immediately rise to the surface—Greek heroes armed and beautiful. Another illustrious spiritual director reduced man's freedom to a sequel of absurd actions inspired no one knows how, having neither motivation, nor any usefulness, nor any meaning whatever. He proposed as an example for men to follow a character who let mere chance decide for him whether or not he would carry out whatever fancy entered his mind. Any act which had a reason to explain it was considered to be the act of a slave, and freedom, always the result of a hard earned victory, was confused with the emptiness and the retreat from the act of reasoned decision that can be its only base. Such were the extravagant counsels offered us.

On every side it was the same thing; a disdain for reason and for will; that is to say, the deliberate rejection of the two powers which give human acts their value—the power of understanding, the power of choosing.

The less excessive doctors of this mad church were no better professors of energy or of constancy. One of them contributed an example of total withdrawal; one might say that the events of the world disturbed his thinking just as if they were noises in the street. He drove away the sounds of the world precisely as he drove away the annoyance of importunate flies. Obviously he had every right to do so. No one denies that he had this right. Yet after all rarely had one ever seen a philosopher make use of this right with such decision and persistence. It reached a point where nothing interested him but a contemplation—the object of which he sought constantly to diminish—and which acknowledged that the ideal arrangement would be contemplating contemplation itself.

Other writers, it is true, looked out rather more upon the world, but it was to taste all the pleasures that the world dispenses, fluttering from one to the other without ever settling upon any flower. These men advised their disciples to keep themselves infinitely available—availability was their word—for the next adventure which might interest their thirst for novelty. They advised them to quench this thirst at every spring without preferring one to another, never to undertake anything which later might hold them or make them aware of any yoke. Briefly what they really wanted them to be was versatile and frivolous. This admirable state they called freedom.

Whence came such a concourse of errors all of which were equally effective in depriving man of any feeling of his responsibility? One may say that the times were guilty but the responsibility lies also in the writer's vocation itself and in his state. Both the times and the function of the writers caused men of letters—even more jealously engaged than usual in the play of the intellect—to engage in very delicate labors extremely remote from the vulgar worries of man. They lived confined in a sheltered retreat, soundproof, into which the world's violence and harsh demands never broke. Only a subdued murmur from outside, perhaps, reached their ears. They lived exempt from any risk and any duty, in luxury as their art was luxurious; their most daring adventures caused only a little noise, a little talk, which brought more benefits than inconvenience to those among them who ventured forth.

Each of them was free to make the most serious proposals concerning the most serious matters—with all certainty that there would be no serious results. Each one could choose between being as indulgent or implacable, as timid or brutal, as he wanted—and it made no difference. Each one could express the most extravagant or scandalous opinion without anyone ever holding him responsible, without ever being simply and completely discredited. There is nothing at all aston-

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ishing in this very usual failure to hold an author responsible for what he says.

For after all only words are at stake, words which have only diffused and distant consequences and which are deprived of almost all efficacity by the fact that the writers produce them with such extreme facility. Perhaps these are enduring characteristics of the writers' craft. Very likely. Possibly the peculiar nature of those years between the wars did no more than intensify them.

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Yet we must acknowledge also that literature in that same period reached a very high degree of subtlety and precision. Perhaps at no other time was the study of the actions of the spirit pursued so deeply. Literature seized upon the rarest emotion, the most fleeting, the most tenuous. And then these would be magnified, or interminably divided into their smallest components; and out of each such element there would be constructed a whole world to be described with amazing abundance of detail. The writers usually chose the lower levels of consciousness, those planes on which swarm and crowd all the confused and greedy phantoms which man confines to their original abyss—unless he is willing to become their prey, unless he has surrendered the last trace of ambition. Not so the novelists. They presented characters who delightedly evoked these livid specters and, instead of casting them back into the darkness, hastened to abdicate all dignity, all reason, all courage, and became their docile and most unhappy playthings. The novelists seemed to have borrowed from the doctors all their patients and their madmen. Often it looked as if they knew no other kind of human being.

It cannot be doubted that their investigation, when conducted intelligently, was not fruitless. The novelists cast a sharp, bright light here and there upon the force of environment, of habit, of memory, of instinct and what not. But these forces, all of them, are of those which conspire to destroy man's dominion over himself and the world. They constitute, all of them, the inertia which weighs upon man's will. There is not one of them that does not excuse, or explain or justify man's weakness. All of them combine to relax man's energy. Presently, slowly yielding to them, deprived of the only power within himself that confronts the future and can mold man in renewed hope, man the conqueror is only a piece of driftwood floating along, docilely obedient to any tide or current.

No matter what may explain the art of these last twenty years, that despairing image of himself was all it furnished man. Man presented perhaps no very different image to the artist contemplating him.

Art, which is kinglike, godlike, knowing no obstacles to its creation save those invented by itself, chose to depict none but depressing heroes, endlessly indulging in attentive and studious contemplation of their slow decay. Doubtless they made sad examples, but they were excellent portraits of those who had conceived them, as they were also of those who took pleasure in these recitals of corruption—the men who wrote the novels, the readers who read them, bored or idle, engaged, all of them, in looking at their inner selves, inexhaustible and useless, perhaps because they never gave to life outside them anything worth talking about.

A strange spectacle surely, this literature entirely preoccupied with describing weakness and the excuses for weakness. We became so used to it that it appeared natural. It described weakness, I said, but the word "described" is not strong enough; actually it praised weakness, explicitly or at least tacitly, in that it saw nothing more interesting, nothing more worthwhile to look at. The novelist seemed to have no aim but that of telling, in a hundred different ways, a story of weakening energy. Energy was shown broken down into a multitude of wholly sterile impulses. The writers showed man's energy exposed to all sorts of degrading temptations, invariably yielding to them without a struggle. The description of this process was judged to be exact and deep, precisely to the extent that it discovered low or absurd or futile motives for man's behavior. In those years one might well have thought—listening to the writers—that the absence of reason, grandeur or firm purpose, rather than their presence, was the distinctive mark of mankind.

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Such excessive error remains exceptional. But who may say with certainty that it does not correspond to a permanent temptation in the literary profession? For this reason: the writer is immersed wholly in his work of writing; he does not shoulder his share of the troubles of his fellow men. The writer's work is what counts, not how he lives; he does not hesitate to avoid, as far as possible anything that might interfere with his work. He looks after his body, he performs a daily series of mechanical acts, so automatic that he ends by not having to think of them at all. Often he does not even need to go forth, as other men do, in search of food. An income attends to that, or some employment that usually requires little thought or expenditure of effort. Under these conditions we cannot be surprised when the writer becomes languid, enfeebled, loses all vigor, and takes his only pleasure in observing himself; and when, consequently, there is no horrible monster that he will not invite into his mind in order to escape his profound boredom.

And so one cannot say that our recent litera-

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ture is an accident. It represents, rather, the logical and fatal terminal point for any literature that lives by and for itself. In a sense this literature is the most faithful of all literatures to a certain essential characteristic in writing. For it is what any writer necessarily must produce if he is only a writer and is interested only in words. And of course such a writer ends by boasting of his condition—evidently—and by being entirely at home and content in his sterility. At the same time he becomes more and more reckless and frivolous in what he says—for his words do not engage him anywhere. So here he is ready to preach any absurdity because incapable of dealing, in his own conduct, with the slightest trial and powerless to overcome the slightest obstacle. He is the perfect man of letters, a man of words.

It is entirely natural and proper that those who choose to devote themselves wholly to writing should try to avoid what obstacles and trials they may. It goes without saying that they have special need for calm and serenity. I say only that this detachment cannot be enjoyed without perils, and that these perils are extremely serious, and that the writer should attempt to counteract their disastrous consequences instead of deliberately exaggerating and accepting them.

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I invent now a man accustomed to standing firm against the hard blows of fate and who, because he works at a difficult task, or because he leads an adventurous existence, is exposed continually to great danger. The urgent demands of a life of action which permit him neither mistakes nor any whims, is the hard school in which he learns the order of importance of things. The necessity for each virtue becomes clear to him for it is in his life itself that he sees to what needs each virtue corresponds. He knows that man can still muster a last remnant of energy from the depths of his being, enough sometimes to save him when, exhausted, he thinks he is lost and yearns only to yield and to submit.

And then such a man decides to write. Sometimes it happens that he is a great writer. There are examples. He does not invent, or he invents as little as possible. Rather, he transposes. He seeks only to communicate his experience to others. I am perfectly aware that what he writes will be worth no more than the talent he possesses. Yet surely it would be impossible not to place greater confidence in his testimony than we give to the uncertain fictions of a novelist. Such a man possesses all the qualifications entitling him to be heard. The absence of these qualifications in the men who have written the literature of the last twenty years not seldom has caused many of us to turn in anger against literature itself.

Communications

YOUNG DESTROYERS

Tulsa, Okla.

TO the Editors: Everyone reading Mr. Dutton's factual account of juvenile delinquency in your September 14 issue must have been shocked; must have said, as I did, "I knew it was bad, but not that bad." Whatever has got into these kids? People used to say bad children were the product of poverty, neglect, broken homes. But that does not cover the case now, because I know many who come from prosperous families; they lead sheltered lives. These young vandals are out for excitement. When they deface a school, a church, or rob a filling station, it's just for the hell of it. What leads them on? Several things: the comics, the movies, the radio—mostly the radio; all those crime stories coming in over the air.

A concern has something to sell. How to get it before the public? An advertising expert is engaged, who hires a script writer, who creates a great detective, or a crime doctor, or a district attorney, or a Charlie Chan, or the rampaging editor of a sensational newspaper and his girl friend—all kinds of people. But the indispensable ingredient is crime, crime, crime!

Very well, I can understand that food for jaded appetites must be strong. Also I can visualize the amazed horror when the police sergeant calls up the house and tells your wife her son is locked up on a charge of burglary. That boy has soaked himself with those crime stories and wants to get in the game himself, either as detective or criminal—it makes no odds which. "You should have loved him," says Father Flanagan—as if we didn't, the brat!

This craze for putting crime stuff on the air as a means of making sales won another distinguished customer recently when a great life insurance company, with fanfare, announced a new series of crime stories, "Here is your FBI." You were to meet more spies, kidnapers, thieves, murderers who had been run down by Mr. Hoover's famous organization. I was floored, for here was my own employer sponsoring my pet aversion. Can you, I wrote my president, after sampling his wares, explain the connection between life insurance and these poor, shoddy tales? I could understand, I told him, why exploiters of tooth paste, hair oil or cigarettes might use such stuff, because there isn't anything really to say about their products; and as for the connection, it doesn't matter anyway. But life insurance. . . .! Can you really be unaware, I asked him, of the treasures buried in your own historic files, those dossiers reciting the very substances of human sorrows, heroisms, stretching back to before the Civil War? Why should my company have to turn to the criminal files of the FBI?

Then boldly I spoke of the dullness of apprehension in insurance officers who could sponsor such appalling stuff. Why did they ignore the human values contained in life insurance? I had long entertained the notion that something in the mechanical functions of operating a financial

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institution must benumb the imagination to the point where men are really unaware of what they are handling.

> I often wonder what the vintners buy
> One-half so precious as the stuff they sell.

Why not tell your public the stories of those simple people who are in your files—those sad, heroic, troubled little people—how life insurance had rescued them and changed their fates? That would create the very mood and temper of the heart which makes selling insurance so warming and agreeable.

Actually, I got a reply. My president, a tolerant, kindly man, thanked me. He welcomed criticisms. But I got the feeling that I had been dealing with high affairs beyond my competence. It is remarkable how clever men can skirt the edges of questions without ever coming to grips with them.

E. A. Braniff.

THE SIN OF SEGREGATION

Louisville, Ky.

To the Editors: Father George Dunne's article, "The Sin of Segregation," in the September 21 issue of The Commonweal, is both stimulating and provocative. It raises questions which demand a hearing and require sober judgment, prudent examination and impartial, unbiased treatment. I fear that Father Dunne's approach to the question, far from clarifying some of the basic issues involved, only adds to the general confusion.

In attacking the position of the moralist whom he quotes (and I believe it would have been only fair to the moralist in question as well as to the reader to give the entire context of the passage so ruthlessly damned) Father Dunne waves aside an entire set of principles which is essential for an objective and impartial solution of every moral problem. To arrive at a correct and honest answer of any moral case, I must know the object, the end or motive, and the circumstances of the act. It is as much a violation of casuistry "properly understood and practised" to ignore one of these three essentials as it is to employ what Father Dunne labels "equivocation" and "to rationalize violations of principle."

Before Father Dunne, or anyone else, can charge injustice against a given Catholic school, he must know the circumstances under which that school acted in refusing to admit a Negro. For certainly Father Dunne must admit that there are considerations of justice as well as of charity related to the faculty, the student body, and to the Negro himself, as well as to the common good, which must be taken into account before coming to a decision.

Nor does it follow that a right in strict justice to education is equivalent to a right in strict justice to a particular school unless it can be proved without doubt that, in this given case, "education" and "this particular school" are necessarily identified.

May I ask Father Dunne's lawyer friend whether, in denying the accepted interpretation of "private school," he would demand that a Catholic school admit Negro students with white students in a State where this practice is forbidden by law?

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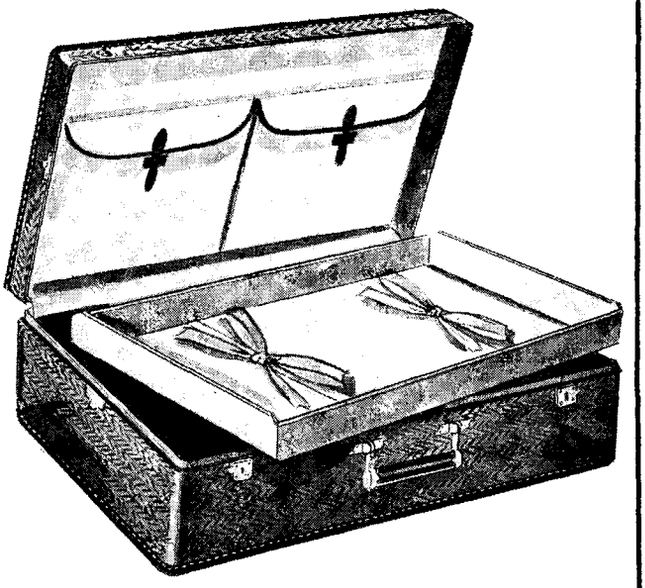

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I am sincerely interested in every phase of interracial work. I believe in the full recognition and realization of the rights of the Negro as a citizen and as a Catholic. But I do not think that those rights can be attained nor that the Negro's cause can be advanced by an unrealistic and unethical approach to the question.

JOHN A. PRIEST.

St. Louis, Mo.

TO the Editors: My sincere congratulations to you for your courage in publishing Father George H. Dunne's splendid, masterful and all too truthful article: "The Sin of Segregation." It should jolt the American conscience out of the complacency with which it has viewed this ghastly moral evil.

JOHN P. MARKOE, S.J.

St. Paul, Minn.

TO the Editors: I should like to say a word in reference to the letter sent to you by Marie Conti Oresti and published in the October 5th number of THE COMMONWEAL. May I say that there are four Catholic "essentially" military schools in the United States, all of them in the North? I can hardly speak for the other three, but as president of Saint Thomas Military Academy I may say that we do accept colored students. I rather think that this may be true of the other schools.

The Very Reverend VINCENT J. FLYNN.

SHARECROPPERS

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: The Southern Tenant Farmers Union, with headquarters in Memphis, Tennessee, has asked for support for its campaign to win a guaranteed $625 minimum annual wage for sharecroppers, tenant farmers and wage hands in the cotton country. The Union reports that 60 percent of the farm families in Arkansas earned less than $400 in cash during the war boom year of 1944. The planters are seeing to it that earnings go even lower this year. They have been instrumental in having ceilings imposed on cotton pickers' wages in parts of Mississippi, Arkansas and Texas (under the Economic Stabilization Act) which fix the upper limit of pay for a ten-hour day at $2.00 to $2.50. A laborer on a cotton plantation averages only 125 days work a year in normal times.

The people in the cotton country are determined that they shall not be driven back to the misery of the 1930's when evicted sharecropper families were camped on the sides of public highways and "Okies" in ancient jalopies were making their way West in search of work at a few cents a day in migratory labor camps. Their campaign for $625 a year guaranteed by contract with the employers, should demonstrate to the nation that there must be improvement in the grave economic problems of the South.

We know that democracy is not safe in America so long as the agricultural population of the South lives in poverty too abject to permit minimum decency, poverty which furnishes fruitful soil for racial antagonisms. The men and women of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union have shown that they have the courage to challenge the system which has enslaved them. We cannot do that job for our sharecropper friends but we can help.

The National Sharecroppers Fund gives aid to organizations in the South that are democratically controlled and directed by natives of that region, and which constructively tackle the evils from which the farm people of the South suffer. We need $25,000 immediately to support the new struggle of the sharecroppers for a $625 annual wage. If you want to back them up, send us your gift.

EDUARD C. LINDEMAN,
National Sharecroppers Fund.
8 W. 40 St., New York 18, N. Y.

LESSON OF PEARL HARBOR

Los Angeles, Calif.

TO the Editors: I saw in the Sacramento *Bee* a reprint of your editorial (September 14) beginning: "Mr. Byrnes's shocked annoyance at the criticism of Mr. Hull in the Army board's report . . ." and promptly recalled the anecdote recounted by *New Statesman* (London) in the midst of the late World War II: a British Brass Hat, embroidered with gold braid, was loudly assailing slackers to his traveling companions on a London-bound train, while he glared at one of them—a young man in mufti. As the train came to the station the young fellow arose and addressed the Brass Hat with mounting choler: "I have heard, sir, what you are saying. Let me tell you, sir, that I am in a deferred occupation. Let me add, sir, that I am employed in the FOREIGN OFFICE. And let me further add, sir, that if it were not for the FOREIGN OFFICE you never would have had your bloody war!"

Of course nobody in Britain or America accuses either foreign office of anything worse than fogeyism.

THOS. R. LYNCH.

ATTITUDES TOWARD THE REVOLUTION

Northampton, Mass.

TO the Editors: I am glad that you published Berdyaev's article which appeared in the new Russian periodical, *The Soviet Patriot* (what a characteristic name!) in an English translation. The more we know about the Russian mind, the better. Yet Berdyaev represents an approach to the problem of Russia and humanity which I do not think the "right" one. Berdyaev is an anti-Westerner and an anti-liberal, fundamentally not in the line of the later Solovyev but of Dostoievsky and of the younger Solovyev who was under Dostoievsky's influence. He is too much of a Slavophile, or of a Russian nationalist in the messianic sense.

He starts his article by stating that the Russians who rejected Bolshevism in 1918 for noble motives—"in the name of the highest values and ideas"—did it because Bolshevism was not nationalist or patriotic enough. These are no highest values or ideas. In fact, the best Russians rejected Bolshevism not because it was not nationalist enough but because it was a return to autocracy, the

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extinction of that feeble and flickering flame of liberty under law and individual dignity which had been kindled in Russia under Western influence and which had been nurtured by the passionate dreams and the heroic sacrifices of three or four generations of liberals and socialists.

For these Western ideals Berdyaev, like so many Russian and German thinkers, has neither high regard nor real understanding. Berdyaev, like so many other Russian émigrés, when Bolshevism proved a mightier builder of empire and a greater glorifier of the Russian name than the preceding autocracy, welcomed Bolshevism. He had formerly called Bolshevism an inverted Slavophilism, and from his point of view he is right. Thus he can speak, like all German and Russian anti-Westerners, of a *doctrinaire* attachment to the principles of liberty, and of a fear of "socialism," this word used again in the sense, the non-liberal and anti-Western sense, in which Spengler or Dostoievsky would have used it.

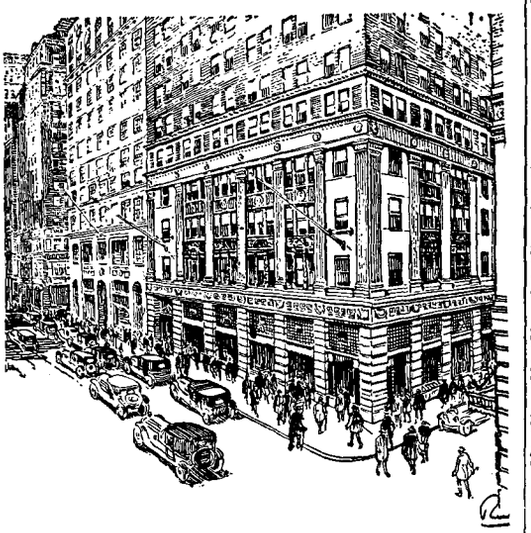
There is the same messianic arrogance which has disfigured so much of German and Russian thinking when Berdyaev speaks of the Russian people, in which all mankind was reflected. And he stresses the dynamism of life and movement in the way of which we have heard too much in these last twenty-five years.

HANS KOHN.

The Stage & Screen

Carib Song

THERE IS no question but that there are nuggets of excellence contained in Katherine Dunham's serious musical play of the West Indies, but unfortunately these appeared to me fairly buried under a shifting endless mass of material. The thing is so greatly over-long, even the dancing of the star, Avon Long and Tommy Gomez, and the superlative singing of Harriet Jackson and William Franklin, plus some good tunes by Baldwin Bergersen and William Archibald could not keep it shapely. I think one of the reasons for the sprawl, and consequent lack of interest, will be that Miss Dunham's work (and that of her various troupes) has by this time achieved a degree of familiarity approaching formula stuff. Evidently there is just so much activity (jigging and jumbo) possible to the inhabitants of one of the Indian isles, after which there is just so much repetition. In any case, the formula would appear to depend largely on costume and color (always striking); upon the carrying on and off of a number of provocative props; and upon, of course, the dancing, which cumulatively frenetically rises to one ritual or another among the painted jungle. William Archibald's book, outlining the tragic adventures of an unfaithful wife, does indeed make use of this customary pattern. But if he has employed one kind of formula on the one hand, either he or his composers have completely neglected the most ordinary musical one on the other. One consistently finds singers given protracted monologues before each song, and the vast



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spread of "numbers" seems never to be interlocked with the story but rather appended to it. Perhaps this is really what is meant by a "musical play." If so, I cannot think it a useful form. Avon Long (here with a Carib brogue) completely stops the show with another of his exquisitely neat note-stopping arrangements. As he is certainly one of this department's most permanent enthusiasms, it will only be necessary to underline his presence. Harriet Jackson's singing of the lullaby, "Sleep, Baby, Don't Cry," I thought lovely; and for Miss Dunham herself, as a talking actress, I can only reiterate that she is one of the most exciting of dancers. If she could find it possible to carve this present offering somewhat (and even more than somewhat) I think she would find better business. (*At the Adelphi.*)

Live Life Again

DAN TOTHEROH'S verse play lasted exactly two nights and I do not wish to seem to be raking ashes in mentioning it here. In spite of innumerable crossed fingers, and the truly heartfelt wishes of the entire Street, the piece was not good. I rather imagine the ultimate point behind Mr. Totheroh's conception of a Prairie "Hamlet" will have been an honest and stern criticism of the American Matriarchate. But the psychopathy of his hero certainly over-specialized the case, dropping it into melodrama with all universality lost. The boy, finding his adored mother buried before his return from school, conceived an unjustified hate for his father, and the piece ended tragically and longwindedly as expected. And its prosody was as sad. If it were ever possible to imagine Hamlet as a bore, it would be to think of him as lacking *language,* mouthing *clichés* rather than the "grand words" of the book. And unfortunately, so reduced, here he was on the stage of the Belasco last week. Mr. Totheroh's people metered worn truisms and small talk for eight long long scenes, and I may add that the determined pedestrianism of both sentiment and expression could no more have fitted into any known prose. If this failure should be laid to Poetry on the Present Stage, it will surely be a false conclusion. There was no poetry at all. Nor verse.

There were, however, sensitive acting performances by Thomas Chalmers, Zachary A. Charles, Mary Rolfe, and Donald Buka; all, in fact. And I thought S. S. Krellberg's intrepid production was splendidly staged by Sawyer Falk, and set by Albert Johnson. Every experiment managing to squeeze through to Broadway should be guarded, carefully considered. Even the errors can prepare the ground for the runs. I hope very much this will be Mr. Totheroh's present and future case.

KAPPO PHELAN.

Walk, Don't Run

SOME people find that crime-and-detection films clear the air and give temporary release that makes audiences think better. Perhaps this is so because the mysteries, besides furnishing a vicarious thrill in book or film, are usually concerned with situations entirely different from the escape seeker's daily life. Here are a couple of new detective movies, not the best in the field, but sufficiently out of this world to make you forget, for at least a couple of hours, this era called atomic.

The problem in *"Scotland Yard Investigator"* is more interesting than its solution: the director of the National Art Gallery in London discovers that the Mona Lisa, which the Gallery has guarded during the war and is now about to return to the Louvre, is a fake! Should he tell and create a scandal that would destroy his chances of being made a baronet, or should he keep his secret and search for the original? In following the latter course, he runs across some tough customers including a collector, whose main happiness in life is owning priceless art treasures, who would stop at nothing to add to his collection, and a Cockney couple who are as cold blooded in committing murder as they are brazen in demanding a hundred thousand pounds for the original Mona. Producer-director George Blair allows his film to get rather talky in the beginning, but he manages to build up some good suspense later. The plot, which has loop holes that make you feel superior to the Scotland Yard men on the case, is revealed in a straight-forward manner so that you knew all the time who killed whom. Forrester Harvey and Doris Lloyd are so cheerful in their viciousness as the Cockney pair that they send shivers down your spine. Erich Von Stroheim plays the Raffles of the art world without the wicked flair that gave him such a reputation during the twenties as "the man you love to hate," but he still wields a mean sword stick. As the National Gallery director, C. Aubrey Smith, properly British and muddling, still talks through his heavy eyebrows. C. Aubrey is now Sir Aubrey; he was knighted for his contribution to "good relations between the people of England and America." I don't think this characterization is exactly an example of that contribution; but the film does mark a certain return to normalcy in that a whole story can be built around that old dodo, the stealing of the Mona Lisa.

In its original play form, part of the action of *"The Spider"*, by Charles Fulton Oursler and Lowell Brentano, took place among the audience. This does not happen in the movie version which uses a lot of shots of New Orleans's dark, winding Latin Quarter to throw you into a dither. Chris (Richard Conte), the handsome young man who plays the lead, is very happy about the whole thing, but he is really illustrating why the private detective business is so dangerous—especially when his partner (Ann Savage) is such a shady character and his client (Faye Marlowe) travels with such unfortunate company. Chris finds himself blamed for two murders before he figures out who done it. His client's co-worker, a magician (Kurt Kreuger) and manager (Martin Kosleck) are the most likely suspects. Under George Webb's direction, this little chiller moves along at a fast clip with the usual series of false clues and unrelated moments of suspense, none of which help you to solve the case. But somehow Chris crashes through. The story's thin but the thrills are plenty.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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Entrepreneur Under Six Flags

EDWARD SKILLIN, JR.

COME WAR, depression, social revolution, there are always people who know how to land on their feet and stay there. They appear in every age of history and it is impossible to imagine a going economic system or a political society where they would not find the means to get along better than all right. Jonas Lied, a Norwegian farm boy who became a vice president of Aluminium, Ltd., is the type. His adventuresome career in many countries illustrates better than most success stories that an able man determined on personal success will get there under almost any political or business conditions. He is none too articulate about himself, his inmost feelings, in recounting his success story.* And that makes it difficult to decide whether humility or braggadocio moves him to say, "Perhaps it is the first clause of the secret code of a business man that he must be ready to trade with the devil whenever profitable, though that was not the code of my first employer, old Loveridge of Cardiff. But I had traveled a long way since then."

In any case Jonas Lied seized his opportunities in England, Germany, France, Russia—wherever they seemed to arise—until he encountered the one project which was the love of his life: the establishment of a northern sea route which would tap the vast riches of Siberia for the western world. Before this he served as an apprentice to a firm of Oslo machinery dealers, sold Loveridge steering gears (Wales), German punching and shearing machines, Burroughs adding machines (in Paris). When the Soviets clamped a lid over his Siberian dreams, he did not hesitate to make as much as 30 percent profit in one month gambling in parcels of textiles under Lenin's New Economic Policy.

His business ambitions led him to master foreign languages one after another; he actually delivered formal lectures in various cities before learned audiences in French, German, English, Russian and in his native tongue. He was determined to get ahead. Mr. Lied was an intrepid hunter, a champion skater, skiier, bobsledder, oarsman. When he found that according to Russian law he could not be a shareholder in his projected Siberian steamship company if he remained a foreigner, he renounced his Norwegian citizenship and swore allegiance to the Czar.

World War I broke out the day after his first Siberian river steamers set out from Germany for ice-laden seas. He delivered them at Nosonovsky on his beloved Yenisei River without a scratch. And throughout that war his ships continued to ply between the ice packs and help the Allied cause. The Revolution was a different matter. He bearded both Trotsky and Lenin in person during its early days, although he had strung along with Admiral Kolchak as long as there was likelihood that the Whites

*Prospector in Siberia. Jonas Lied. Oxford. $3.75.

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would win. Trotsky would not come nearer than within six feet of him and kept his hand upon his revolver; he did not give Lied much encouragement about the continuation of his Siberian operations. Lenin really slammed down the lid. "Lenin saw through me, as Trotsky did not. He had no manner of use for anyone of my type." Boasting or humility?

Curious enough Lied stayed around in Russia quite a while—but thanks to the Aluminum Company, days of dodging bullets in the early Red disorders gave way to lean times in which feasts were seldom and food an almost constant problem. Lenin died and Stalin surged slowly to the top; many of the New Economic Policy men were liquidated. Obsessed with his plans for developing Siberia our hero lingered on. Yet he knew from the outset that it was hopeless. Finally it became painfully evident that he was distinctly out of favor with the authorities of the Kremlin. Only then did Jonas Lied secretely renounce his Russian citizenship and swear a new allegiance to his native land. Only then (1934) did he focus the great effort of which he was capable upon securing an exit permit.

Jonas Lied well exemplifies the love of business for its own sake which has taken so firm a hold on many an American. Once when the Russian Cheka sought to lay a trap for him in the early Revolution days and he spurned the chance their agents offered him to make a killing on jewels, gold and other loot, he clearly expressed the philosophy which motivated his activities. "What I want is activity, usefulness, scope for my energies, the continuation of my chief life interest, not gold." Perhaps the happiest day of his life, according to his own printed story, was the day when he realized that he held the controlling interest in a fleet of Siberian river steamers. He intimates that his social life was as strenuous as his business activity. Yet he remained a bachelor, true to his one love—a vision of the development of majestic Siberia.

What has he learned from a life which, as far as activity goes, has been filled to the brim? What wisdom has he garnered from his adventures in many lands, his absorptions from the great western languages and cultures, his birdseye view of the Russian Revolution, his lifelong association with the business and political leaders of Europe? For one thing in his latter years he has returned to the family home; he has made the 400-acre along-the-fiord family estate of his childhood his base of final operations, the center to which he always returns from his worldwide business excursions. He has become quite patriotic. He is concerned that his fellow-Norwegians do not devote more of their energies to cultivating their own soil. On his own now lush estate he is trying in a sort of Louis Bromfield grand manner to revive past farming glories. Finding plenty even in Russia at the height of the Revolution, he seeks to make his reclaimed family farm a symbol of the plenty that once was rural Norway's. He plans to spend his last days on this glorified homestead.

His final advice to his fellow-countrymen is not to quit "the land, for the deceptive glitter of international commerce." And so he comes to the conclusion that the happiness (the personal satisfaction) he had been so feverishly seeking in a dozen international business enterprises all over Europe resided where it had been all the time—on the wooded, water-skirted acres which had come down to him from his ancestors. Is this wisdom, or is it the natural turn of feeling of a tiring man of 65? It would sound more convincing if it included some hint as to how remaining on one's family acres would provide scope for one's youthful energies, offer opportunities for creative activity and personal ambition. There may be something in the prescriptions of our successful tycoons for getting ahead in business; there is seldom much in their general views. Learning how to live is no by-product of endeavors which have been directed elsewhere.

More Books of the Week

Bewitched Lands. Adolfo Costa du Rels. Translated by Stuart Edgar Grummon. Knopf. $2.50.

THE MOST recently translated Latin American novel has for its scene the Bolivian Chaco and for its author a Bolivian who is familiar with the territory he describes. However, the result is much more than a merely authentic account of existence in the jungle, for Adolfo Costa du Rels, diplomat and onetime President of the Council of the League of Nations, having been schooled in France and having represented his country for many years in the French capital where he achieved distinction in literary circles, brings to this novel a studied sophistication and polish which is hardly to be looked for in a novel about the primitive Bolivian lowlands.

This rare combination makes of the book something of a literary curiosity. The story which is briefly that of the conflict between a tyrannical father and an idealistic son, serves as a vehicle to symbolize the eternal conflict between the old and the new, between reaction and progress, or, more specifically, on the political plane, between colonial feudalism and a rather vaguely defined nineteenth century humanitarianism.

To play the role of the father, the author has chosen a cruel and ruthless despot who wields immense power over the lives and destinies of the exploited Indians who toil on his jungle holdings. The son is represented by a young man who has made his studies in France (including two years at St. Cyr in preparation for a military career) where, in addition to a refinement of taste and of culture which is in marked contrast with his father's pompous manner and limited learning, he has acquired a sense of honor and patriotism differing from that of his father's in that it also embraces the duty of promoting the social welfare of his fellow creatures whatever be their race or their status. Grievances against the father of a personal as well as a public character eventually compel him to become a sort of jungle Robin Hood, heading an underground resistance movement which is destined ultimately to overthrow the hateful order over which his father presides.

It seems that Bolivian nationalists resent the author's representing the native and traditional *cacique* system in so unfavorable a light and his depicting the spiritual values which hold promise of reform as coming from outside the country, i.e., from France. Whether or not the picture is overdrawn and therefore not truly representative, there

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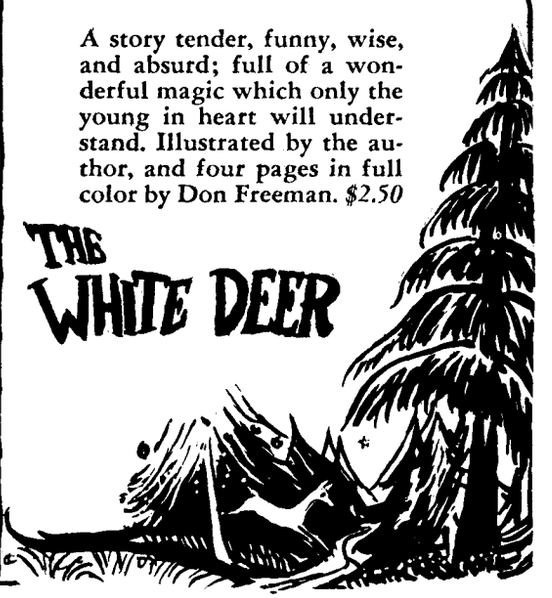

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is no question but that the chief merit of this short novel does not lie in its presentation of the Bolivian social problem. That does not appear to have been the author's main concern, for he touches only lightly on the subject precisely as he might on the hero's love of hunting or of writing poetry in order to give background and substance to his character.

Neither, however, are the author's efforts mainly directed toward the detailed portrayal of character. With the exception of Treweek, the English oil prospector, none of his characters is particularly well-drawn. In fact, in some respects his characterization of the son, the hero of the novel, seems slightly amateurish, at times almost ridiculous.

It is a short novel and the author, like a portrait painter, appears to be filling the background of the picture impressionistically in order to concentrate on the essential, which for him is to capture the atmosphere of life on an *hacienda* in the steaming Chaco, and to sustain a mysterious and exotic mood. That this was his chief preoccupation is evidenced by the title he has chosen for the book. Most readers will agree, I think, that he has succeeded in achieving this illusion, the credit for which must in large measure go to the peculiarly vivid qualities of his style.

It may seem (and usually is) futile to discuss a foreign author's style from a translation. But in this case there are tricks of construction, and an originality and abundance of metaphor that are not lost in the conversion. Although I have not seen the original, I have no hesitation in according the very highest praise to the translator, Stuart Edgar Grummon, for turning into very distinguished English prose what must have been exceedingly difficult Spanish to translate. The author originally wrote the story in French and later produced a considerably altered Spanish version from which the English translation is taken. Nevertheless, in the precious avoidance of the commonplace, both in word and in phrase, and in the technical adroitness in conveying subtleties, there is something more reminiscent of French than of Spanish, the latter lending itself more to nobility of expression than to polish. The translator has achieved in the English version a style which in its precise elegance and emphasis on the *mot juste* strongly recalls the mauve decade.

Although the social implications and character analyses are by no means devoid of interest, I feel the book's *raison d'être* lies rather in its exquisitely sensitive description of the Chaco and of the at once baleful and seductive magic which the region casts on the habits of those who dwell in it.

It is therefore rather as a contribution to *belles-lettres* that this latest translation from the Spanish should be judged and as such it is a work of singular charm and grace.

JAMES MACGREGOR BYRNE.

Saints and Strangers. Being the Lives of the Pilgrim Fathers and their Families with their Friends and Foes. George F. Willison. Reynal. $3.75.

MACHINE-GUN officer in World War I, Rhodes Scholar, journalist, classical teacher at St. John's, prolific writer, and public relations consultant with the Civil Aeronautics Administration, Mr. Willison has had valuable experience to write on Pilgrims, be they saints or strangers. No orthodox historian in technique and objective, he developed an interest in the Pilgrims while sojourning in Provincetown where he delved into their records only to learn the falsity of the traditional schoolbook accounts. Here was his inspiration to write a book which would tell the whole truth about these worshipful people and paint, in black and white, their virtues and their vices. He would prick the Pilgrim myths, which incidentally have long been shattered in more sombre works; and this he has done without debunking or ridiculing their pietistic seeking of a collective, puritan utopia.

The student of Plymouth will learn nothing now for he will have found his way through some at least of the listed biographical items. The popular reader would find the book more enticing if the overwhelming minutiae and discursive materials were cut to a minimum so that he could read more rapidly a flowing story. Catholics will be properly upset by such references as Luther's nailing of 95 theses on the door of Wittenberg Cathedral "blasting the autocratic pretensions of the Holy See," or a definition of truth as a pronouncement of the pope *ex cathedra,* "one of the Vatican's more ancient pretensions though never explicitly formulated until 1870 when the doctrine of papal infallibility was proclaimed to a world perhaps somewhat less astonished than amused," or a "not unreasonable doubt about the loyalty of the monastic orders" . . . which "were justifiably regarded as the agents of a hostile foreign power [Rome], a sort of Fifth Column." Devout Episcopalians may be annoyed by references to Henry and Elizabeth or more to the colleges, of Oxford and Cambridge which were in Brewster's day "monastic in regimen and spirit, as they were to remain almost down to our own day—if indeed they are yet wholly secularized." Some will be annoyed by exaggerated statements, journalistic diction, an interest in scandal, a breaking down of the Separatist flight from Holland for the sake of religious freedom, the sharp trading of the Pilgrim worthies, the use of *ye* which was mistaken from the way of writing *the,* as Professor C. M. Andrews often told his classes, the negligible proportion of saints from the Green Gate congregation or from Scrooby, the number of indentured servants and the possible "Romanism" of doughty Myles Standish of the Standishes of Standish who in all their branches "had never accepted Protestantism in any form, steadfastly adhering to their old Roman Catholic faith." With any more groups outraged this book ought to sell even as the New Deal Party emanated from a merger of several discordant minorities.

At all events, Mr. Willison tells a full story of the Presbyterianized covenant or Mayflower Compact, of the signers including six saints, six strangers and twenty-seven "goodmen" in their order of respectability, the suicide of Dorothy Bradford, the desperate life of women in the wilderness, wife and infant mortality, plagues from which the "profane" Billington family escaped to cause "Saints to pondering God's inscrutable ways," heavy drinking, the helpfulness of the Indians who enabled white men to survive, the dictatorial rule of Governor Bradford who kept the colony from being minister-ridden in the fashion of the Cottons and the Mathers, the pious Allerton's peculations, troubles with traditional sinners who are pictured as delightful persons of an easy Anglicanism, and the *troubles* with Morton of Merrymount, "no petie-fogger of Furnefell's Inne" but a scholarly gentleman of Clifford's Inn whose family had a legitimate coat of arms, and who attacked property

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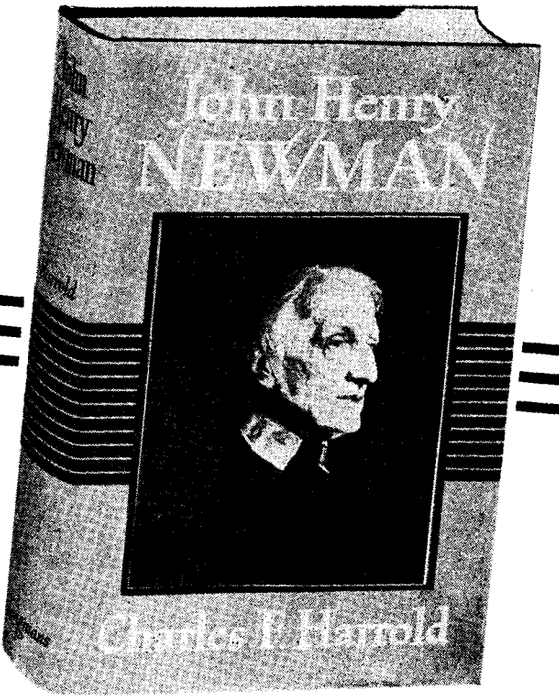

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when he freed indentured servants. To Morton, who escaped the executor as a war criminal, as Standish demanded, the precise Separatists made a "great shewe of religion, but no humanity." Archbishop Laud questioned civil marriages by Winslaw, a layman, who also taught publicly in church, even as was done by burgomasters in Leyden. The criminal code with seven capital offences was not too rigorous compared to that of England to which the author, thinking of a later era, assigns "hundreds of offences." However under the seven statutory felonies, no one was hanged for witchcraft. This was left "to the better-schooled but more benighted men of Massachusetts." Of lesser crimes and misdemeanors, Plymouth knew no end; and moral suspicions of neighbor's children caused an espionage which led wrong doers to the stocks and pentitential benches. The outrageous treatment of captives at the end of King Philip's War is not glossed over. Of religious freedom for non-churchmen there was none, unless by artful contrivances; of toleration there was little, as Christians persecuted each other for the love of God. An occasional foreigner was welcomed as Philippe de la Noye, a French-speaking Walloon, who founded the Delano family of the Roosevelt pedigree. As for contemporary toleration, were not Anne Hutchinson and her followers expelled from the more intolerant Bay Colony "for ignorance of Christ" on 82 points? RICHARD J. PURCELL.

Guideposts to a Free Economy. Harley L. Lutz. McGraw-Hill. $2.00.

A QUOTATION from Victor Hugo stands demurely in its winsome modesty as the author's preface to this assortment of essays on enterprise and government finance: "This book is more than timely: it is needed. I will publish it." The author is entitled to his own opinion, of course, but personally I suspect that most of his readers will feel that they have read it all before in Hayek.

Professor Lutz, while working within the general framework of Hayek's lugubrious thesis, concentrates on problems of taxation and, after 200 pages of almost maudlin sympathy for the sad plight of over-taxed American industry, emerges at the end of the book with a paragraph which gives his hand away conclusively and tags him as just another propagandist. "When one puts together," he says, "the bugaboo of the mature economy, the seduction of the government guarantee, and the bludgeon of destructive taxation, their cumulative effect upon the spirit of enterprise is tremendous. That there should be any spark of vitality left would be amazing, were it not for the reflection that people have lived for long periods in the catacombs. Perhaps the spirit of enterprise has simply gone underground until the reign of terror is over."

It's difficult to comment on this sort of oratory without, in turn, becoming just as sophomoric in your own remarks. Suffice it to say that I, for one, am weary of reading political propaganda under the camouflage of learned academic essays by professors from our better universities. I like my propaganda straight.

Mr. Lutz's alternative to the admittedly imperfect formula of Beveridge for full employment provides additional proof of the bankruptcy of thought in the ranks of those who are opposing the Murray-Patman Bill. I quote: "Instead of all the talking and planning that is now heard about how to save or to restore and stimulate

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the enterprise system after the war, a short and simple formula is offered here as being all that is necessary. This formula, addressed to every citizen, is as follows: *If you want to make a dollar by any honest means you are free to try, and if you succeed you may keep it.*"

This formula is, indeed, "all that is necessary"—to take us double-quick time to perdition and disaster.

GEORGE G. HIGGINS.

Forever China. Robert Payne. Dodd. $3.50.

ROBERT PAYNE has done what every young man has always wanted to do, who understands and loves his own mother-tongue; who longs to travel widely and adventurously among all kinds of people foreign to himself so intimately that he is no longer foreign anywhere, and to think about them aloud in simple and natural words. Too many American writers about the Far East are shy of leaving the deceptively hard-beaten path of economics and international politics lest they cease to be "factual," which word seems to include the very elusive and essentially non-factual topic of "national characteristics" as a clue to authentic interpretation of our relations with the peoples of the Far East in war and peace. National characteristics are made up of innumerable intangibles and imponderables which can only be felt but never appraised; still less tabulated and analyzed as one would the statistics of supply, transportation and distribution.

Ever since our wide-ranging transport pilots who discount distance began to see all the world from above, I have hoped for one who would do for our language what de St. Exupéry did for French literature, or what earth-bound Maurice Paléologue (who was not a Paléologue, or a Greek, nor a Frenchman) did in recording the last days of "la Russie des Tsars," which is a superb piece of journalism though he knew none of it at firsthand, since professional ambassadors are handicapped by the nature of their office and cannot know all classes of men at firsthand. In that book of his he set down in diary form contemporary happenings which he would not check until all the official White Books and Blue Books and what not had been published after the event. His book is delightful and it is accurate, but he could not know any of the things he sets down in his diary as of a certain date, because they had not yet happened, and he only knew them later.

Robert Payne also chooses the diary medium, but he does not fix dates. He is not at all shy of the poetry of flight or of feeling, or of being intensely sensitive to the myriad intangibles which crowded in upon all his senses from the sky, or on the surface, or from the heterogeneous chaos of the confusions of world-wide displacements and potential explosions of humanity. His book is a series of vignettes, shadow-drawings, personal characterizations of men and instantaneous but lasting, deeply cut memory-impressions of things. Out of it comes a coherent picture, a deeply convincing one and intelligible, of the explosively creative forces of China against the millennial greatness of China which this new Chinese age is trying so hard to discount and forget. Japanese youth, for a brief period, tried to do the same thing, with disastrous results to themselves and to the world. After eliminating two of Russia's three social classes by ruthless force, Bolshevist Russia also tried to do the same thing, but when Russia's illiterate one-class majority began to read and write by the simple and effective process of being

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THE FLOWERING TREE

When we are reading of the past we often wonder how people endured the smells that attended lack of sanitation and absence of bathing facilities; their noses, we feel, must have been oddly insensitive. But smell is not the only sense organ and if we have sensitive noses today we have quite abnormally insensitive ears. To the roar of the airplanes, road traffic, sirens and signals of all sorts we add the blaring often of several radios in a single home proclaiming world news, football results and jazz; to a medieval the question might well be: can any sanity remain with this constant assault through the ears on the brain?

Yet we have a wonderful resource in the mere turning of a knob. The radio can add to the hideous clamour about us or it can bring to us the music that is really there, drowning the clamour and lifting us into peace.

Caryll Houselander writes her rhythms to teach us how to listen through the blare of life's noises to God's music which is as truly there as the music the radio brings. But there is one great difference—we need not, we should not, turn the knob to shut off life that we may listen. "Since one can't simply *dismiss* one's environments" she writes "it must be caught up and woven into the Rhythm." For Rhythm is "not simply a freer way of writing verse, but is a part of a plan for contemplation to be spread in the world."

Miss Houselander suggests to her friends that they themselves write rhythms as a special way of learning to listen to God's Rhythm of the universe, which we too may discern in dawn, noontide, evening and night; in the cycle of the seasons, supremely in the Church's liturgy. How successful her friends are we do not know, but anyone familiar with the hymns of the middle ages will realize that she herself has caught a note that strongly echoes much of their work; the note of daily life transmuted, to which she adds a more modern appreciation of color and sounds:

"And I should see the world
like a young field of wheat
growing up for the grain,
watered by Christ's tears."

and again:

"until the sun went up in the blaze of the day's heat,
and with red wine burning through thin gold,
it was lowered slowly onto the altar stone
of the darkening world, where the sheep were in fold."

These are from *Philip Speaks,* which was first printed by itself in a magazine. A leading English critic, a non-Catholic, sought out the author to express his admiration and arrange with her to publish it in book form. Later came the other rhythms varying with the vast variety of human life deeply experienced. The general subject of the book is the flowering of Christ in man, the general aim to put to sleep all the trouble and fret of life and rock us in prayer in the arms of God.

—F. J. S.

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shot if they did not learn by a given date, Russians fused their new aspirations with their old Holy Russia, which has given them a certainty Japanese have never possessed and which has not yet developed in China. Still, Robert Payne sees an emergent certainty coming through out of the very roots of China, out of the Chinese soil itself, and out of the thousands of years of a steady-living but never fully static Chinese people. Hence the title of his book: "Forever China." A salute to Robert Payne! He has done it. WILLIAM FRANKLIN SANDS.

The North Wind of Love. Compton Mackenzie. Dodd. $2.75.

WHEN the reviewer read Mr. Compton Mackenzie's first important book, "Carnival," back in 1913, he felt, (like Henry James and several others) that here was, unquestionably, a new talent, a new note in the contemporary novel. Since that distant date, he has read every volume (and there are some forty of them) that Mr. Compton Mackenzie has written, though he no longer feels the same way about talent save, of course, for rapid composition. Reading Mr. Mackenzie has merely become a tradition or an irresistible habit like smoking Turkish cigarettes, or sipping a *crème de menthe* every night after dinner. The comparison is not too inept, since the Mackenzian style has always been marked by a slightly cloying opulence which, amid much that is humorous, virile and arresting in this writer remains its chief defect. It all ends in one retaining just about five volumes from among Mr. Mackenzie's collected works on the permanent shelf. No one of these, moreover, belong to the lengthy sextet of novels, collectively entitled "The Four Winds of Love," which its author has been producing wind by wind during the past eight years. That habit of using twenty words per sentence when ten would do (and do better), that terrible loquacity, also known to Proust, has grown on Mr. Mackenzie with the fleeting years he chronicles in his prose saga of a pre-War and post-War Scotsman. The present volume deals mainly with the movement toward Scottish nationalism and the mission of the Catholic Church which is conceived a bit too much for our taste as a handmaid to the author's peculiar fads and whimsies. In any case, I have acquired a certain prejudice against most of these family and epoch-chronicles, the interminable cycles of Messrs. Mackenzie, Rolland, Duhamel, Romains, and so on. The only one of them which makes much appeal to this reader is "Les Thibaults" of Roger Martin Du Gard, which never sins by verbosity.
CUTHBERT WRIGHT.

Years of Victory: 1802-1812. *Arthur Bryant, Harper.* $4.00.

AFTER the Peace of Amiens, all England longed for peace. She hoped, as desperately as she later hoped after Munich, that the "peace in our time" would be lasting. Peace with Napoleon, however, like peace with Hitler, proved that its purpose was just to give a dictator time to muster strength for new aggressions. All Europe trembled with apprehension, while the French plotted and marched, and marched and plotted. Addington, the weak and prosy Prime Minister, blustered loudly, and the English press and cartoonists continued to sting Bonaparte with words and drawings without license; while a witless government permitted a wave of economy to reduce military and naval establishments.

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Behind all this in dignified retirement lurked the Great Man who, like Winston Churchill, was eventually to re-emerge to fight the inevitably renewed war.

We are told of barges assembled from up and down the European coast, of troops gathering in vast multitudes along the French shores, and of the desperate mustering of raw levies and insufficient armament in a belated, frenzied effort to guard England's southern shores. It might be the tale of the days that followed Dunkirk.

In the end Sea Power prevailed, as Sea and Air power again prevailed almost a century and a half later. Some English admirals held to their posts guarding the Western Approaches, while others sailed the seven seas in pursuit of enemy squadrons. The wear and tear was terrific. Pitt summoned to the Admiralty, as its First Lord, Admiral Sir Charles Middleton, who "knew more about the patching of discarded ships in an emergency than any man alive." He, as Lord Barham, never lost sight of more distant objectives, even though he covered the Channel. (Some will remember the old battleship, his namesake, a sister-ship of the *Queen Elizabeth*, who lately fought so many and such widespread engagements on so many seas, and finally perished gloriously.) So under Lord Barham rose Nelson, the Combined Fleet was destroyed at Trafalgar, and with the loss of any chance to rule the seas the danger of invasion died. More and dreary years of fighting lay ahead, but with the offensive at Trafalgar under Nelson, as with the offensive at El Alamein under Montgomery, the tide had turned. The long Peninsular Campaign comes after, as did in our day the battles of North Africa, of Italy and of France. But a Wellington, like an Eisenhower, brought allied troops to eventual victory.

This book reveals with incomparable clarity the horror that oppressed Europe for so many years, and her frantic efforts to encompass the fearful but inescapable Bonaparte. The author makes no comparison with the days for us just past, but the parallels are uncanny. May some writer a century hence tell with equal vividness, spirit and learning the tale of "Years of Victory 1938-1945!"

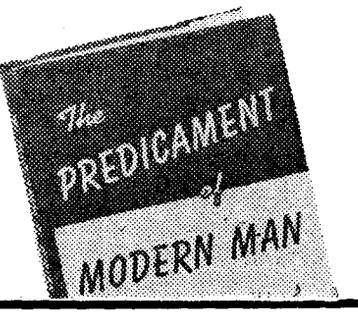
EWEN C. MACVEAGH.

Smouldering Freedom. Isabel de Palencia. Longmans. $3.00.

UNDER a fine and very significant title and with an ambitious subtitle (The Story of the Spanish Republicans in Exile), Señora de Palencia presents a fragmentary account of the bitter and wandering life of exile upon which the Spanish Republicans had to embark when fascism was implanted in their fatherland. And this life of exile still endures for all who have not died in the course of such a harsh ordeal or who have not paid for the experience of going back to a hostile native land, by the total loss of their freedom.

Perhaps there will never be written the whole story of that tragic exodus of half a million Spaniards, men, women and children, who had to seek refuge in foreign lands which were not always very willing to receive them. The author of this book was Minister of the Spanish Republic to Sweden when the great dispersal took place. Her impressions of those cataclysmic days are therefore somewhat remote and second-hand. Even so, they are precise as to details and profoundly evocative.

The book would undoubtedly have gained in universal significance if its author had not so often lost herself



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in details about individual cases which were undeniably important for her because they had to do with her close relations and friends but are of less interest for the reader. We learn from her account about the wanderings of some dozens of republican personalities but not the primary and instructive adventure of the "common man," of the unknown individual, the worker, the artisan, the peasant, whom exile has compelled to forge a new life for himself and who, generally speaking, is much more enterprising in foreign lands than he was at home.

Since Mexico, next to France, is the country which sheltered the greatest number of Spanish refugees and above all the others is the country which afforded them the best refuge—and the author of this book lives there—she has been able to include in her pages the remarkable contribution which the exiled Spaniards have made to Mexican art, literature, science, teaching and even to industry. The activities of the refugees in other countries appear here only in sketchy fashion. That is a tribute to the carefulness of the author, who speaks of what she knows personally or through first-hand witnesses. But when it is a question of relating "The Story of the Spanish Republicans in Exile," a more comprehensive documentation would present the picture in all its shades and colors. Probably the complete story can be told only after the return to the common fatherland when the manifold experiences of those years of sorrow can be collected and integrated. It is a mosaic of considerable complexity; this book presents some of the fragments.

The aspiration for liberty is not confined to the Spaniards living abroad in exile; it also lives and breathes beneath the ashes in the hearts of those exiles still within Spain who comprise the great majority of a people temporarily and forcibly subject to Franco's dictatorial régime. Perhaps the most moving part of Señora de Palencia's book is that which describes the bitter life endured by the non-conformists in Franco Spain and frequently depicts their tragic deaths. She tells how numbers of them are able to face death serenely and without rancor, but also without betraying their ideals; some farewell letters on the eve of execution are collected in this book and comprise most edifying testimony. Incidentally, in going over the pages of this volume it must be noted that it fails to mention some of the men such as Besteiro, the socialist leader who died in Carmona prison, who deserve the homage of remembrance and respect from all republican patriots. The reason is that the author cannot rise above her partisan sympathies nor her hostile feelings as they arise in accordance with the political stand she has taken. Her claim to impartiality is not always successfully maintained. And in the political sections of her work, such as her judgment on the Spanish Civil War, a little more self-criticism would have been desirable, since not everything in the conduct of the supporters of the Republic was praiseworthy during the war, neither were their terrible acts of violence against helpless people in every case "in response to provocations" as the author repeatedly contends.

Heroism and crime, disinterestedness and greed, magnanimity and cruelty were too closely interwoven in the Spanish Civil War; although the cause of the Republic was a just cause, there were many who claimed to serve it by means absolutely inadmissible from a moral point of view. Distinction of this sort is required by ethical standards. The propaganda from both sides ignored or depreciated it. The sufferings endured in exile have

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doubtless led not a few to reflect upon the past and thereby purify themselves. Only in the event that this examination of conscience is sincere and effective can the freedom desired by all the Republicans one day give birth to a peaceful régime in Spain.

ALFREDO MENDIZABAL.

War Years With Jeb Stuart. Lt. Col. W. W. Blackford, C.S.A. Scribner's. $3.00.

DOES the following excerpt indicate that there was a "war going on?" "We again returned to our charming life of social enjoyment among the lovely maidens at the Bower, and deep were the wounds of Cupid's shafts in the susceptible hearts of the gay young fellows at Cavalry Headquarters with their General [Stuart] in the lead; in love as well as in war always among the first." And yet Douglas Southall Freeman, foremost living authority on the Civil War period says of this book: "Every line of this narrative by Lieut. Col. William Willis Blackford has the 'feel' of the cavalry Corps of the Army of Northern Virginia. Authenticity is stamped on each paragraph. The historical evidence is that of an eye witness."

Blackford, who entered the service of the Confederacy as a First Lieutenant of Cavalry finished the war with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the Engineers. While serving as adjutant to Stuart he came to know the cavalry leader very well; better, perhaps, than did any other man serving on the general's staff. The war is here in its entirety. The pleasant days spent in October, 1862 at the Bower, the estate of the Danridge family in Virginia, were certainly not typical of the war. Writing his memoirs some twenty years after the end of the war, Blackford may have had a tendency to glorify some aspects of it, but the grim phases are also in his pages. One gets a clear impression as to how he felt when he fired on the Stars and Stripes for the first time at Bull Run; what he thought as he killed his first infantryman in the same battle; how hungry and tired he was on Stuart's forced marches; how the stench rose from the bodies of the men in blue sacrified by Grant at the Wilderness in May 1864; what his emotions were when the name of Lee was mentioned; what he thought of Jefferson Davis; how he was affected by the surrender at Appomattox. The authenticity that Freeman mentioned is here; if you wish to see the war through a Confederate's eyes, simply read this book.

PAUL KINIERY.

Once in Every Lifetime. Tom Hanlin. Viking. $2.00.

THIS SHORT novel on the most poetic of all subjects unfolds with a real feeling of delicacy and conviction. But the theme is not so much the glow of young love as it is the tragic pressure of the struggle for existence which prevents its coming to fruition. Mr. Hanlin is emphatically of the environmental school; he believes firmly in the influence of propinquity. The district of which he writes is mining country. Beginning as pit boys at the age of fourteen, the young men never really have a chance. When they marry it is in many cases only to do the honest thing. The women for their part are condemned to a life of drudgery in the most sorry surroundings. Here hopelessness is too much even fo young love. The grind and danger in the work, the pitiful wage, the insecurity, the necessity of migrating to find a job, all prove too great.

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The Inner Forum

1945 *Semaine Sociale*

FOR THE first time since 1940 French Catholics were free to hold a Semaine Sociale. It was the thirty-second annual conference on actual problems of modern economic life. The meeting was reported in the London *Tablet* by the actor-author, Robert Speaight:

"The city of Toulouse was chosen as the setting for the Semaine Sociale out of respect for its indomitable Archbishop, Monseigneur Saliège. Most people know him as the 'Archbishop of the Resistance' but it is only when you meet this man that you realize the extent and quality of his courage. To begin with, he is well over seventy. Then, he is paralyzed almost literally from head to foot. He can only walk with the support of two priests, and his speech is so difficult to understand that you can only get its meaning through an interpreter. But the Archbishop is undaunted by these infirmities; he is accustomed to say that everything about him is paralyzed except his brain. . . .

"With him was Monseigneur Théas, Bishop of Montauban. Bishop Théas is a young man in the early forties, and his impulsive patriotism landed him in a German prison. . . . Among others present were the Archbishop of Albi and the Bishop of Limoges. . . . Very conspicuous also was Monseigneur de Solages, Rector of the Catholic University of Toulouse, pale and thin after his sufferings in a concentration camp, and a young layman who had done heroic work at Dachau. . . .

"Several people remarked to me that although a considerable number of the 2,000-odd attending the Semaine were priests, nuns, and ecclesiastical students, nevertheless the initiative of the Week had very definitely passed to the laity. Certain Bishops who were constant in their attendance before the war were now absent; and this reflected the gulf which undoubtedly exists between the hierarchy and the main body of French Catholics, both clerical and lay. The fact remains, and must be faced, that the Bishops as a whole did not oppose the German occupation and the Vichy compromise with the same clarity as many, perhaps most, of the faithful. This has resulted in a failure of confidence which it may take a long time to restore. It is one thing to give canonical obedience to a Bishop; it is another thing to recognize him as a spokesman for the national conscience. France badly needs such voices and Archbishop Saliège had drawn all these men and women to Toulouse precisely because he was the exception and not the rule. . . ."

CONTRIBUTORS

Anne FREMANTLE is at present compiling an anthology of non-Christian mystical writings and is working on a collection of saints' lives.
Jessica POWERS is a member of a contemplative order whom we welcome back to our columns after several years' absence.
Roger CAILLOIS has returned to France after several years spent in the Argentine.
James MacGregor BYRNE was formerly in the American Embassy at Buenos Aires.
Richard J. PURCELL is on leave of absence from the Catholic University.
Rev. George G. HIGGINS teaches at the Catholic University.
William Franklin SANDS at present lives in Washington, D. C.
Cuthbert WRIGHT teaches at Assumption College, Worcester, Mass.
Alfredo MENDIZABAL is giving six lectures at Assumption College, Windsor, Ontario.
Ewen C. MACVEAGH is a New York attorney.
Paul KINIERY is assistant dean of the Graduate School, Loyola University, Chicago, Ills.

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